

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-03 SAB-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SS-20 EB-11 ACDA-19

DRC-01 CU-04 TRSE-00 ARA-16 COME-00 INT-08 FEA-02

FAA-00 DOTE-00 AGR-20 /217 W
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R 201445Z APR 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 349

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 33

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 0414

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

KUWAIT PASS MUSCAT

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: PRESS REVIEW - APRIL 14 - -20, 1974

1. SUMMARY: THESE MAJOR ITEMS RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE DURING THE WEEK: THE INCREASED FIGHTING ON THE GOLAN, THE CONCLUSION OF ASAD'S VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION, AND EVACUATION DAY (APRIL 17). PAPERS ARE COVERING FIGHTING IN NEAR WAR TERMS WITH EMPHASIS ON HEAVY USE OF PLANES AND TANKS. SARG CLAIMS 17 ISRAELI PLANES DESTROYED WITH ADDITIONAL HEAVY CASUALTIES ON ENEMY. PRESS CONTINUED COVER FINAL DAYS OF ASAD VISIT TO SOVIET UNION WITH FULL REPORT OF FAREWELL SPEECHES AND FINAL COMMUNIQUE AND WITH FULL PAGE PHOTO COVERAGE OF TRIP AND OF RETURN CEREMONIES IN DAMASCUS. COVERAGE OF EVACUATION DAY INCLUDED PARADE, SPEECH BY PRESIDENT ON NATIONAL TV (SEE DAMASCUS 406), NUMEROUS ARTICLES OF SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, AND FULL TEXTS OF CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES INCLUDING TELEGRAM FROM PRESIDENT NIXON. END SUMMARY.

2. GOLAN FIGHTING: FIGHTING ON GOLAN, WHICH HAS FOR WEEKS RECEIVED HEADLINE ATTENTION, TOTALLY DOMINATED FRONT PAGES OF APRIL 19 AND 20--"VIOLENT AIR BATTLES," "17 ENEMY PLANES SHOT DOWN," "SYRIAN PILOTS SHELL ENEMY POSITIONS," AND "LARGE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES AMONG ENEMY'S RANKS." ARTICLES REPORT INTENSE FIGHTING ON MR. HERMON WITH ISRAELI PLANES ATTACKING SYRIAN POSITIONS FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY. APRIL 20 STORY CLAIMS SYRIANS CAPTURED ONE ISRAELI PILOT AND FOUND BODY OF ANOTHER. IN ADDITION REPORTS SAY ENEMY PLANES "CONFUSED BY OUR ANTI-AIRCRAFTERS" MISTAKENLY SHELLED THEIR OWN FORCES. IN OTHER STORY APRIL 20 SYRIANS SHOW WRECKAGE OF PILOTLESS ISRAELI PLANE WHICH THEY CLAIM TO HAVE SHOT DOWN. CLEARLY VISIBLE IN FRONTPAGE, PICTURE IS FOLLOWING WRITING: "BATTERY STORAGE--NICKEL CADMIUM, NORTHRUP VENTURA, GULDON BATTERY CORPORATION, METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY, U.S." IN ADDITION TO AIR BATTLES, SYRIAN PRESS REPORTS DESTRUCTION OF COLUMN OF ENEMY TANKS, SEVERAL AMMUNITION DEPOTS, ANTI-AIRCRAFT SITES, AND ARTILLERY BATTERIES. SARG ALSO ACCUSES ISRAELIS UNCLASSIFIED

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OF SHELLING SEVERAL VILLAGES ON LOWER SLOPES OF MR. HERMON CAUSING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.

3. ASAD IN MOSCOW: FINAL DAYS OF VISIT TO SOVIET UNION HAVE RECEIVED HEAVY COVERAGE. THIS PRIMARILY DUE TO FACT THAT SYRIAN REPORTERS RETURNED TO DAMASCUS WITH PRESIDENT AND HAVE SINCE THEN BEEN RUNNING STORIES THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY NOT FILED FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THIS

EXPLAINS, TOO, APPEARANCE AFTER THE VISIT OF SEVERAL PAGES OF PHOTOS. HEADLINES ANNOUNCED SIGNING OF FIVE NEW MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS, BUT SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES MADE NO REFERENCE TO ANY MILITARY AGREEMENT AND DISCUSSED FOUR ECONOMIC/CULTURAL AGREEMENTS IN ONLY BROADEST POSSIBLE TERMS. PAPERS CARRY SEVERAL STORIES FROM PRAVDA WHICH UNDERSCORE SOVIET UNION'S STRONG SUPPORT OF SYRIA. THIS PERIOD IS "DECISIVE PERIOD BECAUSE THE HEROIC STRUGGLE OF ARAB NATION, ARAB SOLIDARITY, AND STRONG SUPPORT ON SOCIALIST STATES...ALL LEAD TO WEAKENING THE POSITION OF THE AGGRESSOR." "SOVIET UNION STANDS BESIDE A JUST PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST WHICH MEANS WITHDRAWAL OF ISREALI FORCES FROM ALL ARAB TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND RESPECT OF LEGAL RIGHT OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." PRESS SUMMARIZED FINAL COMMUNIQUE, IN ADDITION TO PRINTING FULL TEXT, NOTING SOVIET UNION "RENEWED ITS ASSURANCE THAT SYRIA HAS LEGAL AND FIRM RIGHT TO USE ALL EFFECTIVE MEANS AIMED AT LIBERATING OCCUPIED TERRITORY." LOOKING TOWARD SETTLEMENT, ARTICLE NOTED THAT "TWO PARTIES REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN ALL PERIODS AND FIELDS OF THE SOLUTION." (SEE DAMASCUS 407 FOR COMMENTARY.)

4. ISRAEL: PRESS REPRINTED LONG ARTICLE FROM MOSCOW WRITTEN BY JEW WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE RETURNED TO SOVIET UNION BECAUSE OF "DISASTEROUS" CONDITION FOR IMMIGRANTS EXISTING IN ISRAEL. OTHER STORIES REPORT NEWS OF ARAB CITIZENS ARRESTED BY ZIONIST OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES, MILITARY COOPERATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SINGAPORE, EXPLOSION NEAR MEIR'S HOUSE, AND EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT THAT ISRAEL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR INCREASE IN MILITARY OPERATIONS. THERE WAS NO PRESS COVERAGE THIS WEEK OF EFFORTS IN ISRAEL TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT.
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5. OTHER MIDDLE EAST: THERE WAS DAILY COVERAGE OF SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON ISRAELI RAID IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. NEWSPAPERS GENERALLY USED AGENCY REPORTS BUT HEADLINES WERE OFTEN INFLAMMATORY, E.E., "DAYAN LOSES HIS NERVES: WE WILL DESTROY PART OF LEBANON AND WE WILL ANNIHILATE THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." ARTICLE APPEARED APRIL 20 (SOURCE CAIRO) REPORTING ELEVEN KILLED AND 27 WOUNDED WHEN STUDENTS TRIED TO ENTER TECHNICAL MILITARY ACADEMY. NO MENTION IS MADE OF FAHMI'S MEETING WITH NIXON AND KISSINGER. BOTH NEWS-PAPERS NOTE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO JUNE.

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07

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PRS-01 SP-03 SAB-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SS-20 EB-11 ACDA-19

DRC-01 CU-04 TRSE-00 ARA-16 COME-00 INT-08 FEA-02

FAA-00 DOTE-00 AGR-20 /217 W

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R 201445Z APR 74

FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 350

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 34

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6. DISENGAGEMENT: AL-BAATH (APRIL 16) CARRIED SYRIAN NEWS AGENCY (SANA) REPORT FROM BEIRUT ON STATEMENTS MADE THERE BY POLITICAL REPORTER OF PALESTINIAN NEWS AGENCY (Wafa) REGARDING DISENGAGEMENT. STORY SAYS THAT "DESIRE OF ARAB SIDE STAYS WITH FIGHTING NOT ONLY FOR ARAB DIGNITY BUT SECURITY OF FUTURE. SYRIAN FIGHTING...NOT ONLY DIRECTED AGAINST ZIONIST ENEMY BUT AGAINST AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND AGENTS WHO BELIEVE ARAB TERRITORY IS AN EMPTY REGION (THAT WILL) FALL EASILY INTO AMERICAN ARMS." ARTICLE ALSO SAYS THAT WAR WAS STEP FORWARD AND THAT SYRIAN FIGHTING IS DESIGNED TO SEE THAT STEP FORWARD DOES NOT BECOME STEP BACKWARD. COMMENT: IT IS OF SOME INTEREST THAT THIS ARTICLE CARRIED SANA SOURCE LINE AND RECEIVED FRONT PAGE PLACEMENT. IN OUR VIEW, IT IS ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY EDITOR OF BAATH PARTY ORGAN TO CIRCUMVENT SARG INJUNCTION AGAINST COMMENTS ON DISENGAGEMENT BY USING WIRE SERVICE REPORTS TO GET HIS PARTISAN VIEWS ACROSS TO THE PUBLIC.

7. OTHER U.S. COVERAGE: NEWSPAPERS PRINTED IN FULL PAGE SPREAD COMPLETE TEXT OF EVACUATION DAY MESSAGES INCLUDING ONE FROM NIXON. KISSINGER SPEECH TO UNGA WAS COVERED IN AL-BAATH THROUGH AFP STORY. "KISSINGER ATTACKED UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS." STORY LIKE HEADLINE GIVES IMPRESSION THAT SECRETARY WAS SOMEHOW THREATENING COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPING WORLD. NEWSPAPERS QUOTE U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AS SAYING NSC HAS DECIDED TO GIVE ALL WEAPONS FURNISHED TO ISRAEL SINCE OCTOBER WAR AS GIFT. AL-BAATH REPORTS SHAH OF IRAN VISITED U.S. AIR-CRAFT CARRIER KITTY HAWK IN INDIAN OCEAN. STORY SAYS VISIT DESIGNED TO REDUCE CRITICISM FROM STATES NEAR OCEAN AND TO INSURE IRAN REMAINS ALLY IN REGION. OTHER HEADLINES WERE: "NATO MANEUVERS OFF ITALY," "EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S. PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO NIXON," "GROMYKO RETURNED TO NEW YORK AFTER TALKS WITH KISSINGER AND NIXON ON M.E. AND U.S./SOVIET SUMMIT," "AMERICA TO PROVIDE \$336 MILLION MILITARY AID TO SAUDI ARABIA," "AMERICAN ADMIRAL TALKS ABOUT CLEARING SUEZ CANAL," "U.S. PERMITS U.S. FIRMS IN ARGENTINA TO DEAL WITH CUBA,"

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AND "KUWAIT DENIES IT SHIPPED OIL TO U.S. DURING EMBARGO."

8. USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE: MOST IMPORTANT ITEM WAS ASAD'S VISIT TO MOSCOW (REPORTED ABOVE). OTHER COVER-AGE INCLUDED: RUMANIAN AGRICULTURAL DELEGATION IN DAMASCUS, SOVIET FILM FESTIVAL AND BOOK EXHIBIT, FIRST AIR SERVICE BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND BERLIN, POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF WARSAW LEAGUE IN WARSAW, COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOSCOW, VISIT OF DELEGATION FROM SOVIET AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE IN LENINGRAD, SYRIAN PROFESSIONAL DELEGATION VISIT TO BULGARIA, AND PARTICIPATION BY DELEGATION OF PEOPLES' COUNCIL IN INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT UNION IN RUMANIA. SCOTES

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